

Wilmette Park District Appoints Chris Lindgren as New Executive Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WILMETTE, IL — Following a nationwide search, the Wilmette Park District Board of Park Commissioners has appointed Chris Lindgren, CPRP (Park District of Oak Park) as the District's next Executive Director. Lindgren will officially begin his new role on July 21, 2025.

The appointment comes after an extensive recruitment process supported by executive search firm MGT (formerly GovHR). The District's Board of Commissioners saw applications from over 50 highly qualified candidates from across the country, reflecting strong national interest in the leadership opportunity at one of Illinois' most respected Park Districts.

"From the start, the Board was focused on finding a leader who could move our mission forward while staying grounded in the community and its long-term priorities," said Patrick Lahey, President of the Wilmette Park District Board of Commissioners. "Chris Lindgren stood out as a clear choice. He is strategic, communicative, and leads with the values that matter to this district. We are grateful for all of the work Commissioner Kosloskus put into leading this search for the Board."

Lindgren brings more than 25 years of work experience to Wilmette, including 12 years at the Park District of Oak Park, where he rose to Deputy Director of Properties and Planning. In this role, he led many impactful initiatives, including overseeing major capital projects, construction of two net-zero buildings, securing millions in grant funding to expand access and sustainability in public spaces, and reducing electricity usage by 30 percent across district facilities.

Lindgren is a regular speaker at the state and national level on sustainability and park district excellence. He has been recognized throughout his career for his collaborative leadership style and strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. He has led and supported teams across every designation, including seasonal, full-time, exempt, and union staff, fostering inclusive, mission-driven organizational cultures. Lindgren graduated summa cum laude from Concordia University with a degree in non-profit/public organizational management.

"What really drew me to Wilmette was the passion I saw in the people, both in the organization and the community," said Chris Lindgren. "I look forward to listening, learning and working together to shape a future that keeps Wilmette's parks, facilities and programs thriving for everyone."

During the interview process, candidates consistently cited the Wilmette Park District's financial strength, breadth of programming and natural assets, including its lakefront parks and vibrant recreation facilities, as key reasons for their interest. The

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District, which serves nearly 28,000 residents, offers over 4,000 annual programs and events, 28 parks and over 279,000 square feet of community facility space.

The District's mission - *"we enrich the quality of community life by promoting wellbeing, providing exceptional parks and facilities, and offering creative programming for people of all ages and abilities"* - remained a central guide throughout the search process. Lindgren's background, values and leadership approach made him the ideal candidate to carry that mission forward.

Lindgren's arrival marks an exciting new chapter for Wilmette Park District, which continues to build on a legacy of excellence in parks and recreation. With a clear focus on innovation, expanding recreational opportunities, sustainability and community connection, he brings a passion for public service and a deep appreciation for parks' role in enhancing lives.

"I'm incredibly excited to join the Wilmette Park District, an agency with such a strong reputation and deep community roots," said Lindgren. "I look forward to working alongside the talented staff, Board, and residents to build on that legacy and shape a bold, forward-thinking future together."

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